



Weavers Down and Foley Manor

Distance 14km=8½ miles easy walking

Region: Hampshire

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Refreshments: The *Deers Hut*, Liphook

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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Heath, woodland, parkland, hills, surprises

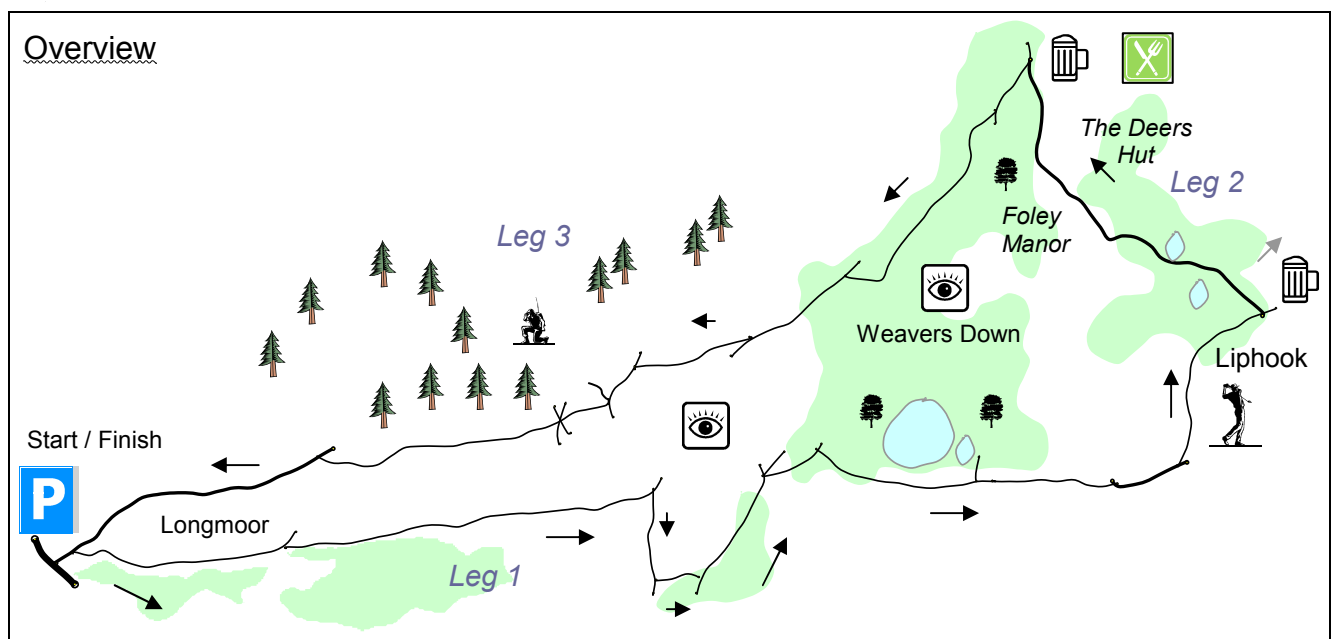
In Brief

This circular walk, mainly in East Hampshire with a section in West Sussex, takes you through unmapped parts of the hilly heath of Weavers Down, then round paths and lakes near Liphook. It holds several surprises along the way.

The start and finish take you through the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Longmoor Training Area. The MoD allows you freedom to roam with certain rare restrictions. You will often hear military activity but these are only “dry” exercises and they *never* use *live* ammunition. You may be invited to watch, or to wait a few minutes, or to expect sudden noise. It is important not to touch (or kick) any suspicious objects. Please don't be put off by all this: Longmoor and Weavers Down are a popular area for mothers with children, riders, joggers and, of course, walkers.



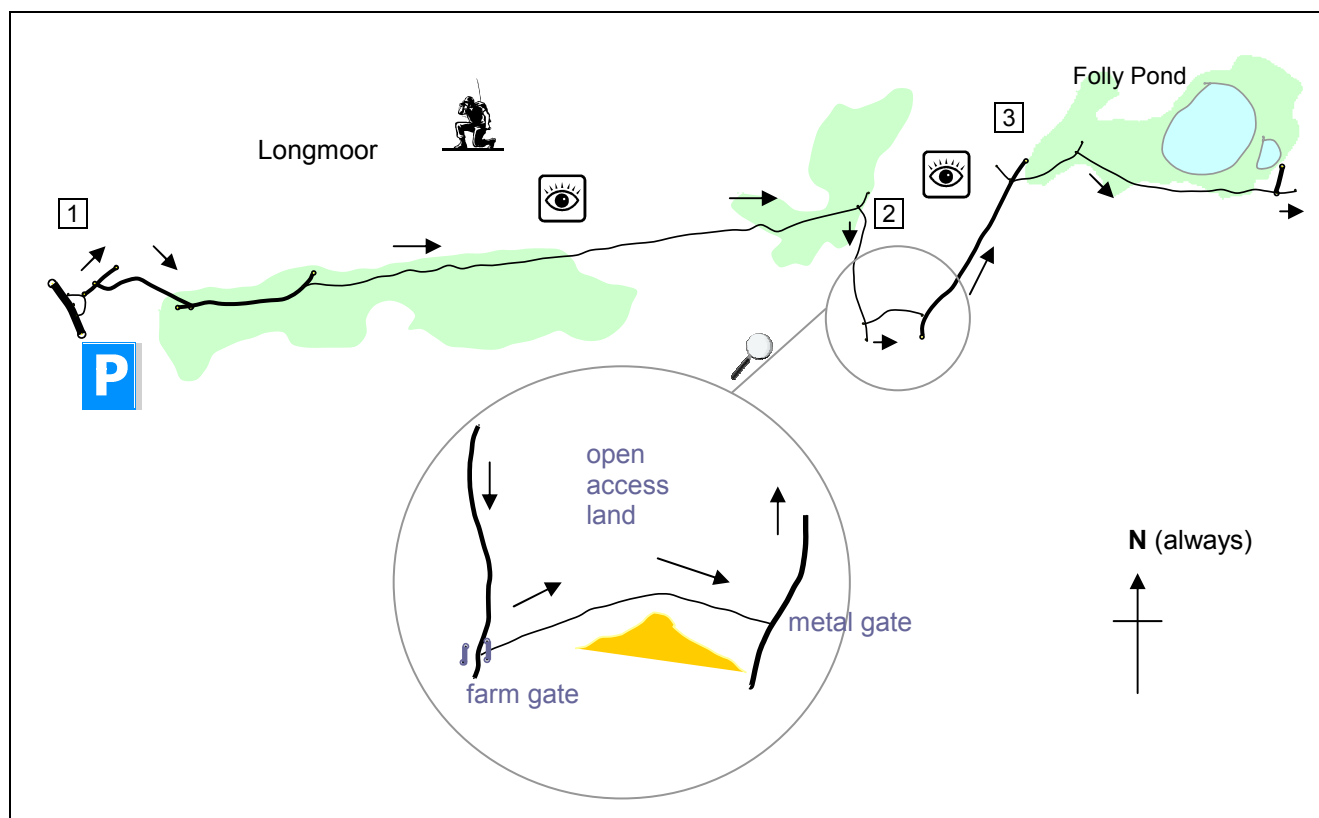
The going is easy, so walking shoes are adequate. There are **no stiles** and no nettles. This walk is probably not ideal for a dog for reasons above.



The walk begins at the **Forest Road** car park, grid ref 782293, postcode GU33 7RB, a mile (1½km) south of Greatham off the A3. This unnamed car park is marked on the OS map. It is on the left (east) side, about 750m (800 yds) after crossing the A3. For more details see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Leg 1: Forest Road to Folly Pond 5km=3 miles

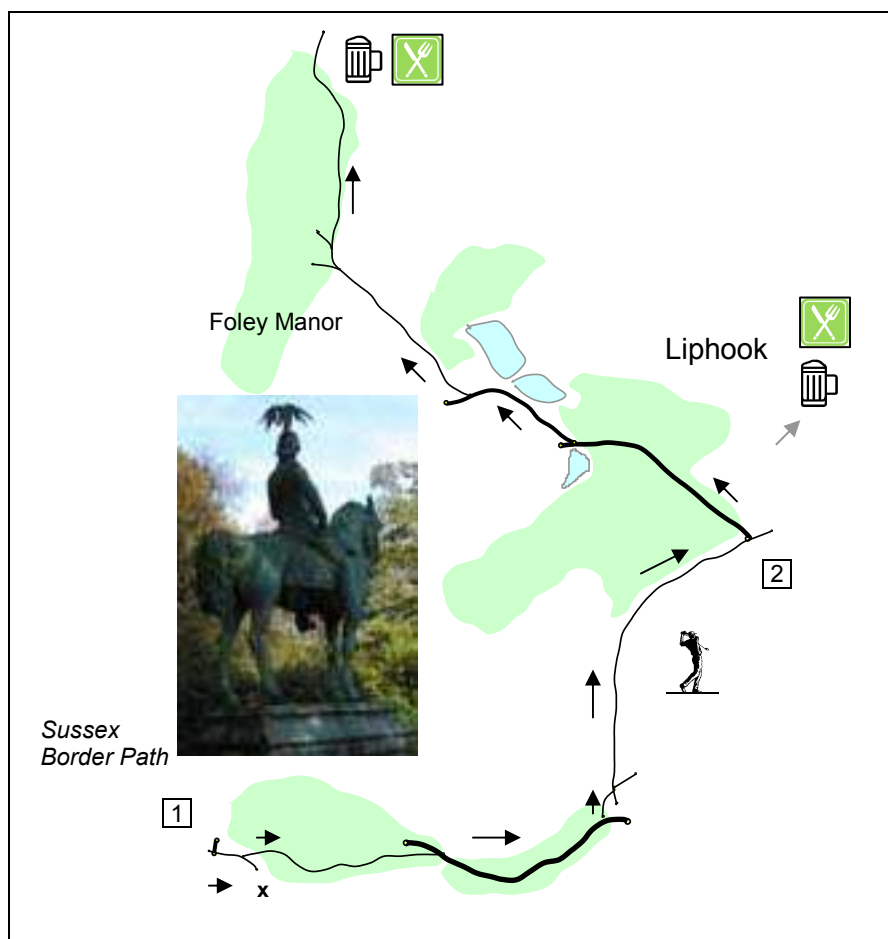


- 1** Leave the car park through the metal gate beside a large steel single-bar barrier onto the main sandy track. You are on the course of the old railway and you will see more of it on the return leg. After just 40m turn **right** on another track by an information board. *Longmoor is a nature reserve with so much dry heathland acting as a haven for rare butterflies, birds and other fauna.* Keep to this main track at all times as it snakes for a while and then turns left at a fence. You will be walking in a straight line beside the fence and under wires for nearly 2km total, enjoying the fine views to the left over the heath and further across Hampshire. Where the main track veers left in about 500m, leave it by keeping straight ahead. Where the path descends to a small pond you come to a fork. The right fork is a woodland path; the left fork stays under the wires; both ways quickly join up again. Carry straight on, eventually passing a private metal gate on the right, after which the main path bends left past a second small metal gate. Go very sharp **right** here through the gate, almost doubling back. This is now West Sussex.
- 2** You are on a wide footpath with extensive beautiful fenced-off heathland stretching away on your left. The path comes to a fence ahead with a gate on each side. The gate on the left should have a notice indicating *open access*. (If this is withdrawn or suspended, just continue to the next

junction and turn sharp left.) Go **left** through the gate onto the heath and keep **right** on a faint path over the grass. After passing the corner of a wire fence on your right, veer **right** and go out through a wooden swing-gate to meet a broad track. *On the right up a bank is a small dog cemetery.* Turn **left** on the track.

- 3 In about 500m, you come to a 4-way fingerpost. Fork **right** here. *You have been walking on the Sussex Border Path (SBP) a long-distance path running from Rye in the east to Emsworth in the west, with another section from East Grinstead down to near Brighton. It passes through some of the most remote and peaceful parts of Southern England.* The path becomes narrow and sunken and meets a house, *Crouch House*, on the right. Veer **right** here, by the wall. The path is much wider now and rhododendrons are rife. About 400m after the house, you are close to the large Folly Pond on your left. (If you would like a quick look at the pond, take this little diversion: turn **left** on a path at a clear break in the trees. This is just before where the path crosses a stream by some plastic pipes. Keep ahead to the edge of the pond where the rhododendrons permit. Return the same way.) At the brick pillars by the gate to Home Park, keep straight ahead. (The tarmac lane on the left leads past a limb of the lake.)

Leg 2: Folly Pond to the Deers Hut 4km=2½ miles



- 1 Immediately, ignore a path that forks right at a fingerpost, thus leaving the SBP. The path crosses a farm drive and winds through woodland. On meeting a lane, veer **right** on it. In about 400m, 50m before the lane goes over a railway bridge visible ahead, turn **left** at a fingerpost on a bridleway. Shortly after, the bridleway turns **left** at a T-junction. Continue on the bridleway, ignoring a marked footpath that forks right. Keep to the left of a

long golf course, sometimes in woodland, sometimes on a golfers' path and always following the fingerposts. At a 4-way fingerpost, turn **left** by the gatehouse of Foley Manor onto an elegant driveway. (However, if you would like refreshments, you can continue straight ahead to the outskirts of Liphook where you will find in about 350m the excellent *Links* pub (Fullers) which has a high-class menu as well as panini and sandwiches. Return by the same route.)



- 2 The driveway eventually curves left and passes a small pond. At the next junction, if you have never been this way before, is a real surprise.

Hugh Rose was brought up in Berlin and perhaps his Prussian military training helped to make him one of the most able commanders in Syria, the Crimean War and India, known for his indefatigable pluck and his civilised good manners. After helping put down the Mutiny he became commander-in-chief of India. He was raised to the peerage in 1866 as Baron Strathnairn. His extraordinary life story reads like the best of J.D. Farrell and Bernard Cornwall.

His equestrian statue by Onslow Ford once stood at the intersection of Knightsbridge and Brompton Road in London but it was ignominiously evicted by a renovated Underground station in 1931. The owner of Foley Manor in 1964 thought the statue would add a bit of class to his gateway and bought it from Westminster Council.

Fork **right** on another driveway which passes some delectable lakes on the right. At a Y-junction, keep **right**, avoiding another private entrance to Foley Manor. *Foley Manor became a top-drawer commuter residence with the coming of the railway to Liphook in the mid-1800s, changing hands several times.* Follow the drive past sheds and later a house, where the drive becomes a track. Ignore a bridleway left and, in 15m, fork **right** at a second fingerpost. Follow the woodland path, keeping a meadow on your right and possibly weaving to keep to the driest course. You join a drive coming from *Stagwood Lea* and, after some more houses, reach the *Deers Hut* pub (Greene King).

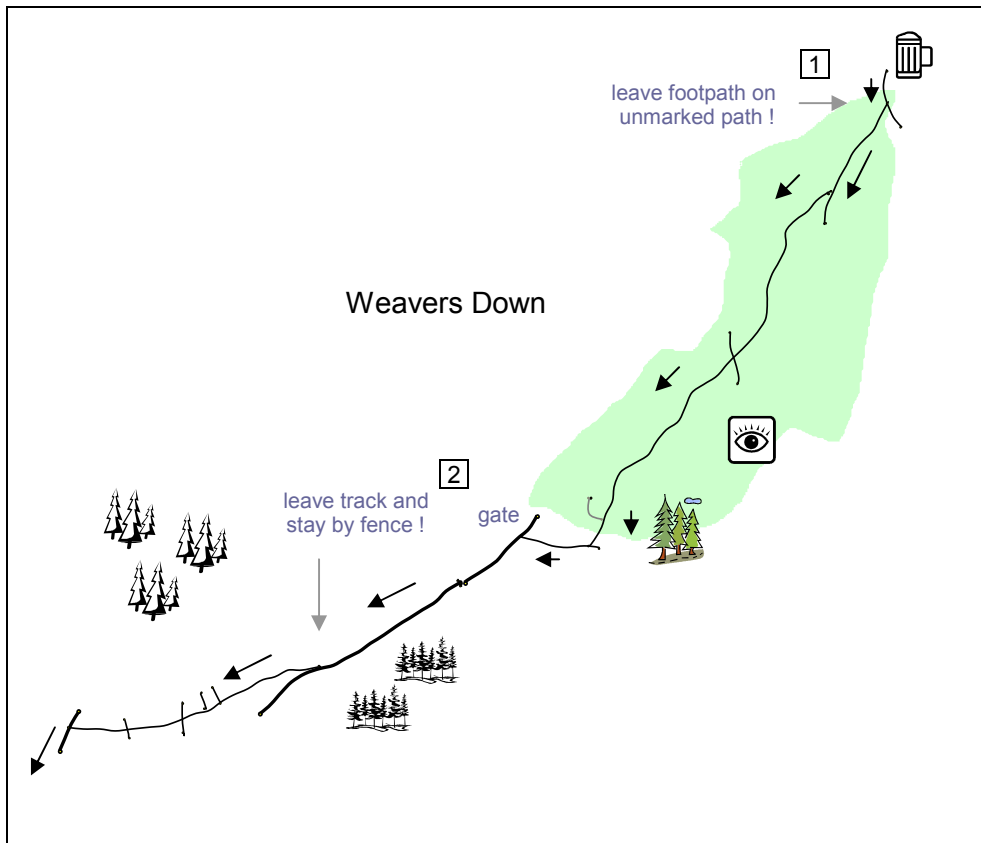


The Deers Hut was built as a Queen Anne Hunting Lodge in the late 1600s. Today, as well as providing good ales and food it is slap bang in the centre of a fine outdoor leisure area and is hugely popular.

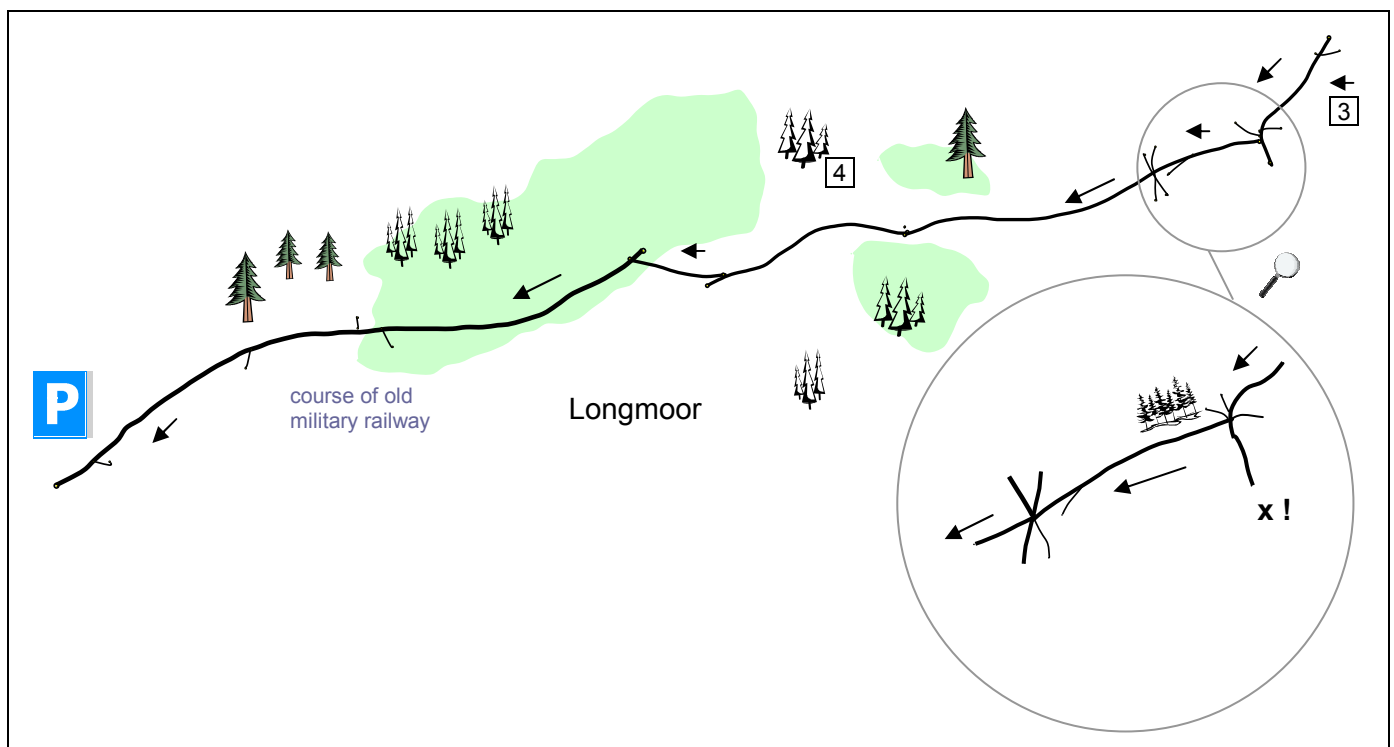
Leg 3: Deers Hut to Forest Road 5½ km=3 miles

- 1 **See map overleaf.** Retrace your steps a short distance along the way you came, close to the houses on the left. (If you are starting the walk here, turn **right** facing the pub.) Just 15m after *Woodland View*, fork **right** uphill on an unmarked path, thus leaving the official footpath. In 230m, you reach a very obvious fork in the path. Take the **right** fork. Follow this twisty but always beautiful path for some enchanted distance over the best of Weavers Down. At one time you go straight over an oblique crossing path and suddenly have breathtaking views left. Avoid all minor turnings off and strive ever upwards to arrive at the top of a hillock crowned by tall pines. From here you can see Folly Pond and much of the rest of the walk. Continue to the edge of the hillock and turn **right** at a T-junction, staying on the level. You finally reach a fence ahead. Turn **left** here on a major wide track. You are back on the national bridleway.





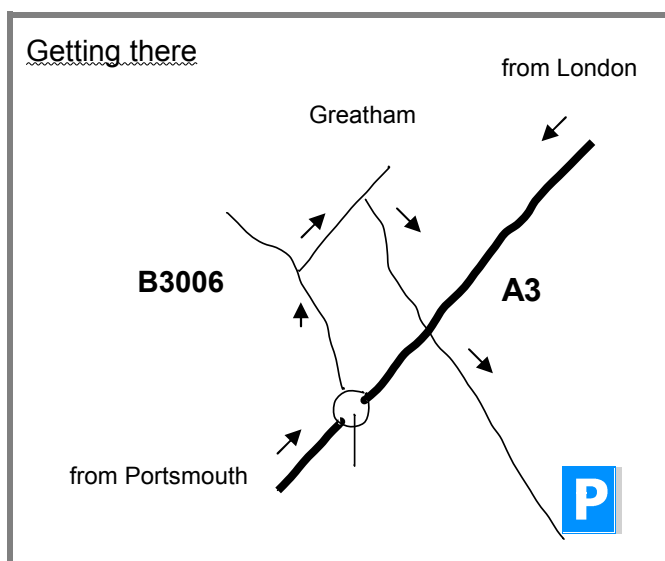
- 2 In 150m, go through a modern metal gate beside a sandy open area and continue on a fenced track. In 330m, the main broad track parts company with the fence on your right. Leave the broad track here by forking **right** staying close to the fence. The rather narrow path widens as tracks join it from the steep slope above. Go over a sandy crossing track, followed in 120m by a narrow crossing path and continue onwards heading uphill. After another 120m, at the top of the hill you reach a broad crossing track. Turn **left** on the track.



- 3 In 200m the track reaches a junction of many sandy tracks. Ignore the very wide sandy track curving ahead to the left. Instead, turn precisely **right** on another track that runs beside some conifers on its right. Soon ignore a minor track forking left and proceed to another major junction. Here, keep straight ahead on a broad track. The track runs westwards for some distance, with land falling away on the right. In 700m you pass an open grassy area on the right sometimes used as a camp.
- 4 The track descends and curves right. Here ignore a very sandy track ahead uphill and stay on the main track as it zig-zags downhill and crosses an open area. Next you meet a very straight and wide track at a T-junction. This is the course of the old railway. *Longmoor Military Railway was built in 1903 to instruct soldiers in railway matters.* Turn **left** on the track. After a long straight walk, you finally reach the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: take the A3 to the junction with the B3006: *Liss, Selbourne*. Turn off in the direction of Selbourne but in 800m (½ mile) turn **right** on the Petersfield Road, direction **Greatham village**. In 270m (300 yds) turn **right** on Forest Road. In well under 1.5km (1 mile), find the car park on the left, 100m before the start of houses.



By train: join the walk from Liphook station.

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